

Note of decisions taken and actions required

Title:	Children and Young People Programme Board
Date and time:	Thursday 20 October 2011 – 2.15pm
Venue:	ICC London ExCel, National Children and Adults Services Conference

Attendance

Position	Councillor	Council
Chairman	David Simmonds	Hillingdon LB
Vice chair	John Merry CBE	Salford City
Deputy chair	Liz Green	Kingston upon Thames RB
Deputy chair	Apu Bagchi	Bedford BC
Members	David Pugh	Isle of Wight Council
	Catherine Grundy	Birmingham City
	Paul Lakin	Rotherham MBC
	David Belotti	Bath and NE Somerset
	Kath Pinnock	Kirklees MBC
	Derrick Murphy	Norfolk CC
	Anne Burns	Cumbria CC
Substitutes	Susie Childs	Lancashire CC
	Catherine McDonald	Southwark LB
	Roy Perry	Hampshire CC
	John Osman	Somerset CC
In attendance	Rt Hon Michael Gove MP Lead Members for Children's Services	
Apologies	Baroness Shireen Ritchie	Kensington and Chelsea RB
	Paul Carter	Kent CC
	Robert Light	Kirklees MBC
	Rita Krishna	Hackney LB

Item	Decisions and actions	Action by
1	<p>Welcome and introduction to the Board</p> <p>Cllr David Simmonds, welcomed the Rt Hon Michael Gove MP and the Lead Members for children’s services to the Board meeting. The Board members introduced themselves to those attending the meeting.</p>	
2	<p>Education reform and schools funding: discussion with Rt Hon Michael Gove MP, Secretary of State for Education</p> <p>Rt Hon Michael Gove MP addressed the members, saying that the meeting was an opportunity for him to hear their concerns and he invited questions from the floor.</p> <p>During the question and answer session a number of issues were discussed. Member sought assurances from the Secretary of State that the diversity of councils and their particular circumstances were being fully factored into in the Government’s reforms. The Secretary of State replied that the Department did appreciate the differences in authorities and were seeking to gather evidence in order to establish general principles for reform which could be applied across all local authorities.</p> <p>Several issues were raised in relation to academies. Members asked for clarification around their powers to intervene in academies that were either failing or likely to do so. Members also raised the issue of school transport to and from academies, the responsibility for which rested still rested with councils. Members suggested that it would be more appropriate for this responsibility to reside with the academies themselves especially as academies have control over the school day’s start and finish time and their numbers are increasing; the Secretary of State agreed to look into the issue of transport for academies. The Secretary of State replied that councils still had a range of powers to intervene in academies where they foresaw difficulties There was also discussion around the issue of changing primary schools to academies, including the potential barriers and how they could be overcome.</p> <p>Population growth and its relation to pupil place planning, was</p>	

raised as a particular issue for large urban areas. The Secretary of State was aware of these problems, and he said he believed local authorities were best placed to lead on pupil place planning in their areas, though their funding needed to be used flexibly to meet demand.

Several Members expressed concern at the creation of the Education Funding Agency (EFA) replacing the Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA). The Secretary of State said that the new Agency had been set up with the aim of simplifying schools funding. It would create a formula that could be applied across all schools to produce a per pupil amount. This funding would then go directly to local authorities for the schools that they maintain to distribute to schools in their areas.

The use of PFI to finance schools building projects, was a matter of concern for several Members. The Secretary of State outlined the potential benefits of PFI for capital projects, whilst agreeing that there were drawbacks to such a system.

Members wanted to see further work done on adoption, including maintaining support for people post-adoption. The Secretary of State said councils could contact him with details of reforms they felt were needed and agreed that the current guidance was too long and too bureaucratic.

In response to a question, the Secretary of State said that the DfE is ready to talk again to the LGA again about the deduction from Revenue Support Grant to fund the central costs of academies. He indicated that he now accepted the case for making the deduction on the basis of the number of pupils in a council area being educated in academies, rather than top slicing all councils on the basis of a national formula. He said he hoped that agreement could be reached on the appropriate 'per pupil' amount that should form the basis of the calculation.

Action:

LGA officers are producing an estimate of what the per pupil amount should be, building on the work carried out over the summer to respond to the government consultation on the issue.

3 Children's Improvement Board update

The Board **noted** the report.

4 What does the LG Group do for councils?

The Board **noted** the report.

Date of the Next Meeting: 25 January 2012, 11.00am, Local Government House,
Smith Square, London SW1P 3HZ